

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA
ROANOKE DIVISION**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

EVAN STRAUSS

Case No. 7:24MJ46

Filed Under Seal

**AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF CRIMINAL
COMPLAINT AND ARREST WARRANT**

1. I, [REDACTED], having been duly sworn, depose and state as follows:

INTRODUCTION

2. I am a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI") and have been so employed since August 2021. I currently work in the FBI Richmond, Virginia, Field Office, Roanoke Resident Agency. I am assigned to work a variety of criminal and national security matters, including the investigation of violent crimes, narcotics offenses, and major offenses such as federal bank robberies and the apprehension of federal fugitives. I have received training and gained experience in conducting investigations, interviewing and interrogation techniques, arrest procedures, search warrant applications, the execution of searches and seizures, computer crimes, computer evidence identification, and various other criminal laws and procedures.
3. The facts in this affidavit come from my personal observations, my training and experience, and information obtained from witnesses and other law enforcement officers. This affidavit is intended to show simply that there is sufficient probable cause for the requested warrant and does not set forth all of my knowledge about this matter.
4. Based on the facts as set forth in this affidavit, there is probable cause to believe that violations of 18 U.S.C. §§ 2251(a) (Sexual Exploitation of Children) and 2252A(a)(5)(B) (Possession of Child Pornography) have been committed by Evan STRAUSS.

STATEMENT OF PROBABLE CAUSE

Search Warrant on STRAUSS

5. On January 24, 2024, a search warrant was executed on STRAUSS's residence, 613 Pasley Lane, Moneta, Virginia, 24121. During the search, STRAUSS was interviewed by FBI agents. In the interview, STRAUSS admitted that one of his online usernames was Reaper. STRAUSS stated that he had been an active member of a group of approximately

200 individuals known as the “Community.” STRAUSS operated a sub-group within the Community known as Purgatory. The Community participates in a variety of criminal activities online, including placing swatting calls, hacking, blackmail, extorting individuals for money, extorting females for explicit photos or videos of themselves, and extorting females to commit acts of self-harm.

6. Among the evidence items seized during the search of STRAUSS’s residence was STRAUSS’s iPhone 13 Pro Max. A search of the iPhone revealed a screen recording in which STRAUSS, under the username “hells_ruin,” engages in a chat on Instagram with a female with a specific username. STRAUSS starts a screen recording using a third-party app, enters back into Instagram where it is apparent that he is already messaging back and forth with the female, and then they enter into a video conversation in which the female repeatedly penetrates her vagina with a hairbrush. Her vagina can be seen on camera. Their Instagram usernames are visible, indicating both parties are participating. The screen recording appears to have been created on January 2, 2024. A minor female (“Victim 1”) who lives in Wyoming and whose date of birth is [REDACTED] 2006, has confirmed her username to be the specific username from the above-mentioned chat. There are at least two videos (both from the same January 2 encounter) of STRAUSS and Victim 1’s username on STRAUSS’s iPhone. Victim 1 has informed that she was not aware that STRAUSS was recording her.
7. In his interview, STRAUSS admitted to getting Victim 1 to cut herself and to send him photos of her doing so. He claimed he did so because she had been sharing personal information about STRAUSS with another individual. He said he got her to cut herself as a self-defense mechanism and that it was “more of a shame thing” so she would “leave [him] the fuck alone.” Victim 1 cut STRAUSS’s username Reaper into her upper thigh at his direction. STRAUSS said he took those self-harm images provided by Victim 1 and emailed them to the Wyoming Department of Family Services (“DFS”) where Victim 1 lives. These emails were found on STRAUSS’s phone and reflect that STRAUSS filed a child endangerment report with DFS based on Victim 1’s self-harm. STRAUSS sent DFS pictures of Victim 1 with cuts on her legs, including two pictures that show “REAPER” carved into her right thigh.

Victim 1 Interviews

8. On February 22, 2024, Victim 1 was interviewed by an FBI Child/Adolescent Forensic Interviewer, and on March 28, Victim 1 was interviewed again. In her interviews, Victim 1 stated that she met STRAUSS online around November 1, 2023. Soon after they met, he began to ask her for nude photos. When she refused, STRAUSS became controlling and started to scream and threaten Victim 1. STRAUSS told Victim 1 he has killed animals before, and he made threats to show up at her house and kill her, her family, and her cat. The threats began a few days after they first met and were repeated on multiple occasions. STRAUSS also threatened to make Victim 1 watch him kill her little sisters. STRAUSS also found out Victim 1’s home address and threatened to “swat” her. After weeks of threats, STRAUSS told Victim 1 to cut herself. He directed her to cut his online name, Reaper, into her thigh. He told her “if you don’t, I’m calling SWAT on your house right now.” To protect her sisters, Victim 1 cut “Reaper” into her upper thigh. This began around

November 12, 2023. STRAUSS's friends also reached to her and told her to cut herself for them but she did not. STRAUSS wanted her to cut her thighs because he told her "he got off on it."

9. STRAUSS maintained in his January 24 interview that his purpose for participating in the Community was to protect females and gather intelligence to help law enforcement. He claimed to have already shared the Community's illicit activity with an FBI Agent out of Cleveland, Ohio. STRAUSS has not been tasked by any law enforcement agency to gather intelligence on law enforcement's behalf. STRAUSS also admitted that he was not directed to gather child pornography and was doing it of his own "goodwill."

CONCLUSION

20. Based on the aforementioned factual information and my training and experience in criminal investigations, I submit that probable cause exists to conclude that Evan STRAUSS did violate 18 U.S.C. §§ 2251(a) (Sexual Exploitation of Children) and 2252A(a)(5)(B) (Possession of Child Pornography).

I declare under the penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.



Special Agent
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Sworn and subscribed before me on this 4th day of April, 2024

U.S. MAGISTRATE JUDGE C. KAILANI MEMMER